

Coins

A fan wants to kick the old bucket habit

By Roger Boye

FOR MORE THAN 20 years, an elderly Rosemont woman has been tossing all of her old coins into a bucket beneath her kitchen sink because she believes some of the coins might be collector's items.

"I just turned 70 and have decided it's time to stop saving them," the woman wrote in a recent letter. She asked for advice about a "legitimate book or pamphlet giving values of old money" so she can evaluate the more than \$200 in coins before trying to sell them.

The woman's elementary but often-asked question prompts me to review some of coin collecting's key references, all of which are sold in many coin and hobby stores.

The book most often recommended is R.S. Yeoman's "A Guide Book of United States Coins," which lists the "average dealer selling prices" for United States coins in several grade categories. The Red Book, as it is also known, is chock-full of illustrations, historical data on coins, and information about locating mint marks and grading coins. The 1979 (32d) edition should be on dealers' shelves in less

than two months, and will probably cost about \$4.

Yeoman has also written "Handbook of United States Coins," a requisite for collectors who plan to sell coins because it lists the lower "average dealer buying prices." The annually published Blue Book costs \$2.95.

In addition, several books have been written to assist collectors and others in evaluating paper money, including the "Hewitt-Donlon Catalog of United States Small Size Paper Money," by Lee F. Hewitt, William P. Donlon and others, and "The Official Guide of United States Paper Money," by Theodore Kemm. Both of those inexpensive guides are published once a year and include background data along with the price information. (Donlon, 86, a currency dealer and hobby scholar, died recently in Utica, N.Y.)

Many collectors simply buy a copy of one of the two major coin periodicals for up-to-date coin price data. Coin World (Sidney, Ohio 45367) publishes a weekly U.S. trends section, with each U.S. coin included at least twice a month; and Numismatic News (Krause Publications, Inc., Iola, Wis. 54945) runs a complete coin market section every two months.